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CIA getting bum rap--Bush

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Contending that the Central Intelligence Agency doesn't deserve the kind of rap it is getting, Director George Bush feels that the CIA is one of the most important agencies for preserving American freedom.

He claims the public will respond by providing the necessary support once it is better informed about the agency role.

After saying he would cooperate fully in following congressional recommendations for revamping the CIA, Bush drew enthusiastic applause when he stated this move must be coupled with congressional protection of intelligence sources.

"I strongly support legislation that is being formulated...that will protect sources and methods," Bush declared.

Bush, one of the principal speakers at the recent government affairs conference sponsored by the National Newspaper Association, attracted a capacity crowd to his Mayflower Hotel speech in Washington, D.C.

The lean and handsome Texan, active in Chinese, United Nations and Republican affairs, said he has taken immediate steps to correct any reported abuses, but he feels the CIA is a victim of cynicism and is taking a generally bum rap.

"The CIA is a target of jokes by every nutty comedian and by panelists on many talk shows," Bush declared, with the result that the CIA has been found guilty without even being given a chance to prove its innocence. "This is not the

American way," according to Bush.

Bush cited the Robert Redford movie, "Three Days of the Condor." He drew a laugh when he observed, "Except for Faye Dunaway, there was no relaxation at all."

In the Redford movie, it was indicated the CIA controls the New York Times to which Bush responded, "If we're controlling it, we're not doing a very good job." And this also generated laughter.

Bush refused to be drawn into a debate over earlier comments by U.S. Rep. Otis Pike, D-N.Y., head of the House Select Committee on Intelligence and critic of the CIA.

Mission of the CIA, Bush said, is simply to provide the best intelligence available to the President of the United States.

How the reports are interpreted is a matter for higher authorities to decide on the basis of information offered from a variety of sources, he stated. And he said information was available about the six "crises" mentioned by Pike, who believes U.S. foreign intelligence operations are "not terribly effective."

In other matters, Bush said some covert actions are necessary, confidentiality is essential to protect sources and methods, there is an over-classification of secret documents, the CIA budget should not be made public because of aid it would give the KGB (Russian secret police) and there should be a single oversight committee to monitor the role of the CIA.

His promise: "We are going to earn the support of the American people."

NEXT: Panama Canal.